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Government  
Printing Office

Washington, D.C. 20401

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC PRINTER

April 13, 1982

AN OPEN LETTER TO JACK ANDERSON

Dear Mr. Anderson:

You have established a national reputation as an investigative reporter by searching out and reporting waste, inefficiency, and heavy handedness in Government. For that, I applaud you. As your columns indicate, you have of necessity grown to depend upon a staff of reporters for much of your legwork. Your Good Friday offering in the Washington Post and other newspapers, under the heading "Public Printer is Criticized on Spending, Cuts," was based on the work of one of your young staff reporters. By publishing this article, your reporter has allowed your column to be used by those very interests whose excessive wage demands are helping to close many of the newspapers which carry your column. Frankly, Mr. Anderson, the article can only be described as a massive distortion, liberally sprinkled with factual inaccuracy. Trusting in your sense of fairness and desire to maintain high reporting standards, I have set forth the facts and, I trust, that after careful review, you will set the record straight.

I, too, desire an end to waste and inefficiency in Government. Your reporter fails to state that I have taken steps to reduce the Government Printing Office's (GPO's) \$160 million payroll by some \$19 million on an annualized basis without firing a single person to date. At the same time, I have held the line on prices for work performed in-plant for our largest customer, the United States Congress, and for the rest of the Government. This \$19 million payroll saving has and will come from careful control of overtime, a hiring freeze which I imposed, and a recently announced furlough. Simply by the reduction of highly expensive overtime, I have saved the taxpayers from \$500,000 to \$900,000 per month. Since I was sworn in on August 5, 1981, GPO's payroll has been decreased through attrition by over 400 people, saving the taxpayer literally millions of dollars. Your article makes several references to my "hiring chiefs and firing indians" and "firing the peasants and hiring cronies." Mr. Anderson, as I said, I haven't fired one person.

The article refers to my hiring 10 non-career Schedule C employees at the GPO. Actually, I have filled 11 Schedule C and two Schedule A slots in an organization of over 6,000 people. Prior to making any personnel changes,

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or hiring any excepted personnel, I met with a three-person team from the Office of Personnel Management. They made detailed recommendations for agency reorganization. Every one of the Schedule C positions were processed through, and approved by, the Office of Personnel Management. It was absolutely necessary, with the major initiatives and sweeping changes which I planned, that I have a small core of non-career appointees in whom I had complete trust and confidence, and who could spearhead my reform efforts. It is the normal practice, whether in Government or the private sector, for a top level manager to bring in his own management team when first appointed to office. I find it difficult to believe, moreover, that I could be criticized for bringing on 13 excepted personnel (a number of whom are secretarial) to help run an agency of over 6,000 employees.

Your reporter states that one-half of the non-career Schedule C appointees are from Florida. Mr. Anderson, again, this is just not correct. Only two were legal residents of Florida when I hired them. Moreover, prior to the announcement of my appointment, I had never met any of the people I hired as Schedule C's or A's. None of them were associated with me in any way -- either politically, professionally, or personally -- during my 23-year residency in Florida. Obviously, the names Bafalis and Cramer were known to me. I am proud to have the very capable offspring of these two distinguished public servants in my employ. Mark Cramer left a successful Washington law practice to join the GPO and is doing an outstanding job as my Deputy General Counsel. Renee Bafalis, who has considerable experience in television and radio, left another Federal agency to come to the GPO and is now devoting her energies to our newly-formed Marketing Department.

Your reporter states that I have doubled the number of GS-18's at GPO. The inference is that my actions have cost the taxpayers a bundle. That is simply not true. The overwhelming majority of these personnel actions were accomplished without additional salary expense. These employees, in their previous positions, had already reached the federal employee pay cap and it does not make one dime's difference to the taxpayer whether they are GS-16's, 17's, or 18's. Their actual salaries were unchanged by their promotions. Your reporter also neglected to report that when I took over the agency there were many vacancies in top management. In order to manage the GPO, I had to fill these positions. Many of the other changes made in our reorganization were recommended in a Coopers & Lybrand study of the GPO or by the Office of Personnel Management.

The most personally damaging part of your article and the one that has made me more than a little angry, concerns office renovations. Your article states, "The implication that Sawyer's office had been gussied up without his knowledge is laughable." Well, it certainly would be; but, the point is that my office hasn't been "gussied up." Your reporter has

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personally viewed my office and knows exactly what has and what has not been done. Total changes for my own office included only the replacement of a 14-year old, totally worn out carpet, 21-year old drapes, and the repair of a 42-year old desk and chairs.

The dirtiest dig in the entire story, because of the heavy-handed innuendo intended, is the statement that "Sawyer's tiles were shipped from Florida at an expense of \$800." I have not replaced any tiles in my office, although tiles were ordered from a firm in Florida for use in the building. Our procurement officers used normal Government procedures to purchase this tile from the lowest bidder and there is no significance to the fact that the bidder happened to be from Florida. What is the point? Is GPO not to do business with anyone from Florida because I came from there? The cost of the tiles themselves was \$806.41. Transportation charges were only \$153.89, not \$800 as reported.

I would also like to point out, for the purpose of putting the whole redecorating matter in context, that the GPO is engaged in a building-wide renovation and maintenance effort. The renovations which you reported took place as part of this maintenance and consolidation program, and they included the installation of a fire sprinkler system, the replacement of dangerously cracked ceilings, and the conversion of unusable space to new offices.

Your reporter was correct when she stated that certain carpeting should not have been replaced, that carpeting was installed in the wrong office, and that GPO trucks were used to pick up some carpeting from Pennsylvania. These improprieties, however, did not involve any redecorations in my own office, and as soon as I discovered that mistakes may have been made elsewhere, I ordered a rejustification of all renovations and an investigation by GPO's Inspector General. As head of the GPO, I have taken the actions necessary to ensure that such mistakes do not reoccur. It is fair to point out, moreover, that 75% to 80% of what was done was absolutely necessary and that 100% of what was done was allowable under GSA standards.

The eighth floor to which you refer includes some 500 employees occupying approximately three acres of building space. I offered on two separate occasions to allow your reporters to tour the eighth floor, and indeed the entire GPO facility, and twice they refused the invitation. Had they taken these personal tours, perhaps they would have better understood the renovations which actually took place and the challenge we face in adequately maintaining and modifying a facility which is from 40 to 80 years old.

As I stated, I ordered the Inspector General to investigate "certain remodeling and refurbishing . . . which may not have been justified by

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need and need alone." Your reporter neglects to state that I ordered that investigation on January 11, long before we received any questions from the press. I did not initiate the I.G. investigation, as the article suggests, as a result of press inquiries.

Contrary to your suggestion that I gave only a summary to Congress, I gave to the Joint Committee on Printing, the Congressional Committee which has oversight responsibility for the GPO, the complete Report of the Inspector General. I have attached a copy of a letter signed by the Staff Director of that Committee, which so states. The Executive Summary of the Inspector General's Report, written by my Office of General Counsel, and not by me, as your reporter states, is an accurate reflection of the I.G. Report and the JCP confirmed it. The reasons I have not and will not release the full I.G. Report to the general public are threefold. First, many GPO employees are mentioned in the Report, most of whom did nothing wrong or incorrect. The Inspector General concluded that no violation of law or General Services Administration decorating standards occurred. The worst that anyone is guilty of is a lack of proper judgment and failure to follow internal GPO procedures. Second, it is not the standard practice of agency heads to release such Inspector General Reports, and that is why I ordered that a summary be prepared and released. Third, the law of personal liability of public officials is extremely unsettled, and I do not intend to court a lawsuit by releasing an investigative report which includes speculation and hearsay.

Oh, yes! One more thing. Since you have chosen to bring the names of Bafalis and Cramer into this, I am willing to reveal that their names do not appear in the I.G. Report in any way. In the heat of an election campaign in Florida, we certainly would not want to confuse the public, would we?

The bottom line, Mr. Anderson, is that the GPO is today a very much more cost effective and efficient organization than it was when I joined it in August of last year. Certainly, we have made a few mistakes along the way, but we acted quickly and responsibly to address the problems and prevent such mistakes in the future. I do not know what I, or anyone else, could have done differently under the circumstances. Nothing, however, justifies the massive distortions and factual inaccuracies in your article.

I have not yet referred to your treatment of the somewhat old story concerning my desire to close GPO's bookstores. The GPO general sales program, of which the bookstores are a part, lost \$6.6 million in 1979; \$3.2 million in 1980; and \$9.7 million in 1981. The savings estimated by this office in closing the bookstores amount to approximately \$1 million annually. Further, as your reporter knows, we have initiated a very substantial marketing effort to increase -- not to limit -- the American public's access to Government documents.

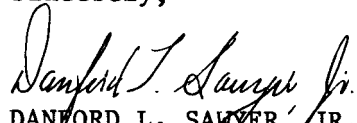
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Now, I would like to present you with a challenge. Based on what I have stated in this letter, I think you owe it to yourself, to me, and to the others named, to question your reporter, check out her sources, and find out why they have fed her what she has reported. I have chosen to take on some very tough problems, including dealing with some hard-nosed unions in the graphics arts field. We have 22 union bargaining units at the GPO, and some of them, as mentioned earlier, are the same outfits which have helped to shut the doors of some of America's largest and finest newspapers in the last couple of decades with their excessive wage demands and uncompromising attitudes. I am raising the possibility that my hiring freeze, tough control of overtime, recently announced furlough, proposal to close the GPO bookstores, and tough financial steps to make the Superintendent of Documents operation once again a viable financial entity, have raised the ire of a lot of people who put personal gain ahead of the welfare of the American taxpayer.

If you want a really good story, you should look into why the wages paid at GPO are far in excess of wages paid in either other Federal printing plants or the private sector. Why don't you also look into the GPO's high staffing levels, its continuing problems with upward mobility and the practices which contribute to them? Talk to GPO management, Joint Committee staffers, involved Congressmen and Senators. Look into why GPO bookstores are located in certain cities and not in others. If you do some real investigative reporting, you are going to discover many things which will not stand the light of day, and you won't find any of them under my new rug.

As one of the most widely read investigative reporters, you should not pass up this opportunity to learn for yourself why your young reporter was used by "crafty" craftsmen who do not want "Government in the sunshine" at the GPO. The story is there. Help me expose and correct these problems, and you will really be doing a service to this country. You can do no less.

Sincerely,

  
DANFORD L. SAWYER, JR.  
Public Printer